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ABSTRACT

The responses of 19 members of the National Council of Teachers of English (classroom teachers, secondary school department chairmen, curriculum directors, supervisors of English, members of college departments of English, and English specialists with state departments of education) to a letter requesting them to describe the kind of year they anticipated for teachers of English in their areas are reported. Several of the 19 (out of 37) respondents sent out additional copies or variations of the questionnaire to teachers or supervisors in their areas. The questions included (1) What reductions or additions have been made in your budget for English and with what consequences? (2) Has your school or district eliminated or added positions having to do with planning of curriculum and supervision in English? Have the responsibilities changed for those still holding such positions? (3) Has the position of the department chairman been strengthened or weakened? How? (4) Has the class load increased or decreased at any level, and to what extent? (5) What innovative programs have been inaugurated or eliminated? Why? (6) What problems, if any, have arisen as a consequence of attempts to integrate the schools, and how do these problems affect the performance of teachers of English? (HOD)

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

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"A Report of Conditions of English Teaching, 1973-74"

Edmund J. Farrell and Jo Ann Farrell*

In March 1970, a number of NCTE members, spotted throughout the country and knowledgeable about English curricula and related developments, expressed willingness to respond periodically to questionnaires about conditions of English teaching in their geographical areas. Among the group were classroom teachers, department chairmen in secondary schools, curriculum directors and supervisors of English in districts and cities of various sizes, members of departments of English and of education in colleges and universities, and English specialists with state departments of education. Persons in this information network were told that their responses would be used to keep members of the Executive Committee, the headquarters staff, legislators on education committees, and the membership at large better informed about the teaching of English throughout the country.

On September 2, 1973, a letter was sent to members of the network, requesting them to describe the kind of year they anticipated for teachers of English in their areas. This general request was then divided into a number of discrete questions having to do with teaching load, budgets, innovative programs, responsibilities for supervising teachers and planning curriculum, etc.

Nineteen of the 37 members of the network responded to questions posed in the letter of September 2. Of those 19, several sent out additional copies or variations of the questionnaire to teachers or supervisors in their areas. So as not to confuse the reader, responses to questionnaires mailed by a member of the network are summarized and treated as the response of a single person. While no evidence has come to the authors' attention that conditions being reported may be atypical of conditions nationally, the reader should bear in mind, nevertheless, the small number of responses to each of the questions that follow.

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*Mr. Farrell is associate executive secretary, NCTE; Mrs. Farrell is a former secondary teacher of English.

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Editor/Edmund J. Farrell

Research Assistant/Charlotte Carlson
Editorial Services/Charlotte Carlson
William Subick
MTST Operator/Sheri Ann Downing

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1. WHAT REDUCTIONS OR ADDITIONS HAVE BEEN MADE IN YOUR BUDGET FOR ENGLISH AND WITH WHAT CONSEQUENCES?

Of the 19 respondents to this question, only two said that budgetary allocations had been increased. Many noted that though budgets had not been cut, in effect they had been by their failure to keep pace with inflation. In some areas there seems to be a new awareness of the need for paying partial expenses for teachers' attendance at conferences; nevertheless, two people were so unfamiliar with such funding that they thought travel budgets referred to class field trips (which incidentally are being cut many places because of the cost of gasoline for buses). [All indented statements are excerpted from the letters of respondents.]

GENERAL BUDGETS:

...we have had some small increases in budget for materials and supplies (which sometimes go for try-outs of new materials, sometimes for underwriting new programs in individual schools, sometimes for professional materials for ourselves and teachers).

A hopeful note is that three people reported added budgets for English with consequences of increased theme reader availability; increased inservice; more money for a specialist, materials, and inservice. One reported a $600 increase for the drama program in each school; and one reported increased control by the English teachers in a given building over funds spent for English (with approval of the principal).

The same amount of money or an increased amount of money doesn't provide as much in the way of materials and services as formerly; consequently, there is some apprehension.... We have replaced optimism with a kind of smiling caginess.

Generally, budgets remain at last year's level. This means departments have sufficient funds for teaching materials and supplies, although chairpersons want more and boards cry poverty.

Budgets on all levels continue to be extremely tight, despite savings effected by reducing the size of faculties [with the implementation of] the quarter system...in nineteen secondary schools--a move that has increased teacher loads.

Teachers have agreed to take modest increases [in teaching load] in return for job security, improved pensions...and the right to determine what is taught.

It seems to me that people are standing pat on eroding ground. Budgets have not been sliced, but neither have they kept pace with the rising cost of just about everything. Teachers in one of the more affluent suburbs have been without a contract since last June, and negotiations

are taking on a more grim appearance.... What this indicates to me is a stiffening in attitude by the representatives of the community, and it is a question whether this represents, also, a hardening of attitude within the community itself.

There have been a couple of instances of teachers near retirement age not having contracts renewed because the district could hire two young vivacious things for the price of one old one. Well...the... old ones took their cases to court, won. I think administrators are sufficiently afraid of this now to try it again.

TRAVEL BUDGETS:

Travel, never a big item, is now either a smaller item or an item requiring more rigorous justification--a disguised cut.

Expense money even for participants in major professional conferences and conventions is almost nonexistent.

Travel budgets districtwide were cut by many thousands of dollars. This year, 1973-74, the names, by name, of those who would attend national conventions were published, so no coordinator/consultant or principal might guess as to whether he might attend. All district-wide consultants may attend, but no teacher may go along [also] as has been the case in past years. ...on all state and local conferences released time may be given to attend, but no registration fees or meals or transportation will be afforded out of district funds.

You would think we were living in the middle of the depression years. At home, there is no money for English teachers to attend professional meetings unless they pay their own way, and can arrange for sub-stitutes. We have been asked to use money we get for supervising student teachers (and the amount is small) to pay for a few members of the department to attend some meetings.

We've also had some increase in travel budgets everywhere, which means the system will probably finance one trip per supervisor instead of about 1/2 trip as in the recent past. Hopefully, expanded travel budgets in the districts might get to teachers, who are usually passed up on this point.

Consultant's travel budget is the same. Travel budget for conference attendance by teachers of language arts is $50.00 larger than last year's.

2. HAS YOUR SCHOOL OR DISTRICT ELIMINATED OR ADDED POSITIONS HAVING TO DO WITH PLANNING OF CURRICULUM AND SUPERVISION IN ENGLISH? HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITIES CHANGED FOR THOSE STILL HOLDING SUCH POSITIONS?

Although two districts each added a language arts supervisor, additions were balanced by the failure of other districts to fill vacancies created by

retirements or relocations. One respondent wrote that a hopeful sign was that only one position had been eliminated this year. (One hesitates to imagine a doleful sign.) Budget tightening and, to a lesser extent, philosophical postures about the worth of subject-matter supervision are clearly determining both the existence and the responsibilities of supervisors and curriculum specialists for English. At present, there appear to be some administrative pressures to make English specialists into either generalists or interdisciplinary resource persons. The trend--if it is that--bears watching.

> There has been little or no change in this area except that in one large district a language arts supervisor position was created and the position was speedily filled. Prior to this new position, language arts supervision was a part of general secondary supervision. Rapid growth of the district made this new position a must since one person could no longer supervise all things secondary and survive.
>
> One district added a supervisor of interdisciplinary curricula.
>
> ...there are new features, some of which seem to reflect trends in this part of the country. Most important, the Department of English/Language Arts is--as the name suggests--a K-12 operation; the pre-1970 department was exclusively secondary, leaving general supervisors on elementary level to coordinate language arts along with all other subjects. The nature of "supervision" has also changed. Though we retain the title "supervisor" as a requirement for having the position funded by the state, the job no longer entails the formal evaluation of teachers. The department is primarily concerned with coordinating curriculum and staff development.
>
> Not added or eliminated--just redistributed as part of decentralization. There is talk of eliminating chairmen and consultants.
>
> Some elementary consultants now curriculum specialists; generalists in decentralized areas of city. They are team members--interdiscipline and resource people.
>
> A reorganization of the central office--engineered by the superintendent and a couple of aides with no input from others--resulted in loss of...subject matter supervisors. Hence, two people once vitally concerned with English program development are now assigned to districts as generalists. The reasons for the move away from subject area consultants are partly economic, partly political, and vaguely philosophical (i.e., the rationale was presented in terms of "philosophy of administration").
>
> Under reorganization, supervisors are still planners and resource persons, but accountability...for program implementation is solely within the school. While this should diminish the blame-letting which was common when supervisors shared accountability with principals and teachers, the schools still lack the nerve for implementing programs--especially, they lack a decent departmental structure.

...one state after another is phasing out their English curriculum supervisor in the state office; Massachusetts has deliberately and overtly done this, and New Hampshire has simply failed to fill that position since it became vacant late last winter.

Four persons reported no change in responsibility for curriculum supervisors; another four people did report changes in responsibilities. These boil down to an increase in load because of the complexity of tasks and the difficulty of articulating among schools and between levels. Two people see a trend in responsibilities toward more general duties rather than more specialized activities. Both reported less time for classroom observation and assistance to teachers. One district reported significantly more students and teachers and therefore more tasks for the supervisor.

3. HAS THE POSITION OF THE DEPARTMENT CHAIRMAN BEEN STRENGTHENED OR WEAKENED? HOW?

The responses to this question reveal that the position of department chairman is in flux, with the position being strengthened in numerous districts while simultaneously being weakened in many others. The strengthening occurs in various ways: released time for selection, supervision, and evaluation of teachers; extra pay for additional administrative responsibilities; opportunity to exercise strong leadership in curricular planning; considerable control in determining the departmental budget. Where these conditions do not obtain, the position most often has never existed, has been eliminated, or exists principally for efficient sorting of mail and instructional materials.

Department chairpersons generally receive both extra time (no more than two periods) and money ($500 - $900) at the high school level. Less than a quarter of the junior high or middle chairpersons receive time and money. About one-fourth receive money ($250 - $500) and one-fourth time (one extra period). Of course few junior or senior high chairpersons actually administer the department.

Except in the smallest of school systems, English department chairmen are usually given released time from one or two classes and an additional salary of from $200 to $400.

The largest district in our state this year for the first time is granting $300 over and above contract pay for chairmanship work. The money became available through hard campaigning on the part of the supervisors and a bit of budgetary legerdemain. Our own district is studying ways and means granting extra pay for our secondary chairmen for next year.

Our state legislature authorizes additional money for outstanding teachers who meet rigid performance criteria. Each district is allotted a portion of this money.... A teacher qualifying...receives

a flat seven percent of his regular contract salary. Up to now we... have recognized our chairmen by making sure they have been included in the qualifying group. But sad thing about it is [that] there is not enough money available to recognize outstanding regular teachers and department chairmen at the same time. ...the state criteria require that recipients be named on the basis of projects completed in the classroom which go over and beyond the usual requirements. This makes it doubly hard for chairmen, for they must apply on the basis of projects rather than departmental responsibility. Therefore, we are trying to assure financial recognition for the role of chairman, not tied to state programs. If we are successful, we will have made a tremendous step forward. ...I would say that the role of department chairman is becoming gradually stronger, perhaps at a glacial rate, but it <u>is</u> moving.

Most schools now have English department heads--of some sort. In far too many cases the honor is questionable and is a matter of default--just someone to answer the mail and order books--no released time.

Another hopeful note...five people reported that in some way the department chairman has more strengths. These strengths involve the evaluation of teachers, more control over the content of English courses and materials as well as budgets; one district reported more time for chairmen and more responsibility for teacher selection and evaluation. Three districts reported that the chairman's position remains "weak and ineffective."

Department "heads" in both junior high and senior high have a more definite role as the result of a districtwide committee of teachers and administrators.

Positions...have been strengthened slightly. Although there does not appear to be a significant increase in the number of positions with school time for supervision and other departmental duties, there do seem to be more departmental chairmanships with the chairman having some real authority to exercise leadership in regard to the English curriculum as well as instruction. There are fewer chairmen who have been named to receive mail only.

A department-chairman friend (secondary) has...lost all <u>time</u> accommodations plus the extra pay formerly due to chairmen. College English staffs are losing out to a viciously short-sighted "credit-hour-production" formula which responds much too quickly to drops in enrollment.

I believe that English department chairmen have been given more responsibility and less teaching load in all of the larger schools. The small schools do not have a chairman. Or if they do, it is in name only.

The loss of services "from downtown" hasn't been accompanied by a significant strengthening of the department heads--and ours is one of the weakest departmental organization plans of any big city I know.

Weakened. Time allotment in senior high has been reduced to one hour maximum no matter how large the English staff is.

...especially in small communities, the position of English chairman, never firmly established, has either been abolished or been made ineffectual by eliminating time for supervision or upgrading of instruction. Differentials have either been eliminated or reduced.

During the easier-money days, schools which wanted to establish chairmanships did so. It seems unlikely that any will be established now.

4. HAS CLASS LOAD INCREASED OR DECREASED AT ANY LEVEL, AND TO WHAT EXTENT?

Members of the network leave classroom teachers little to be cheerful about: on the whole, loads continue to increase across country, with increases ranging from slight to substantial. The most positive news is that loads appear to be stabilizing in some districts, but at levels much higher than that recommended by the profession.

Class load remains about the same. I suppose it is good that there is no great increase. "About the same" means approximately 135 pupils in five classes.

Class loads have not appreciably increased; some have, but because of computerized modular schedules which are adjusted through hand-scheduling.

...when necessary, workload was increased--though not sharply, yet. Class loads vary from about 120 to about 160. The average district has a class load of 140.

In some cases, teacher loads are heavier, but not enough to make a difference. The heavier part comes with the increased amount of administrative busy-work, emphasis on "curriculum" building, committee work, etc.

...no [apparent] load increases.... Last year there was a grand total of 40,990 students in 2,611 English classes...grades 7-12. Average class size was 20.9.... Get this, though. Those 2,611 classes showed an enrollment of 54,703 students; 13,713 students were registered in more than one English class.

Budgets have been cut, with fewer positions in English. As a result, class loads are increasing, department chairmen have less or no time for coordinating, and teachers from other subject fields are picking up one or two periods of English.

We don't have good news concerning class load. The majority of districts report an increase, some "startling increases." One [respondent] felt that primary grades are decreasing but [the] secondary [are] increasing. Only two districts reported no change.

It would take more optimism than I can possibly muster to say the situation appears bright. Class loads have increased, not extensively, but they have increased. I see no decrease in the near future.

5. WHAT INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS HAVE BEEN INAUGURATED OR ELIMINATED? WHY?

Elective programs continue to proliferate, some districts are moving toward more open education, interdisciplinary humanities courses are being created, and attempts are being made to individualize instruction. But counter pressures are being felt: legislative mandates for programs in career education and for state-wide assessments; renewed emphasis upon basic skills, particularly in reading; retention of archaic state policies governing textbook adoptions; unanticipated problems with flexible scheduling; and the expense of inservice education for teachers working under restrictive collective-bargaining contracts.

Nothing innovative is happening.... High school English is rapidly becoming an all elective mess. Planners of elective programs seem to be more concerned with what the staff wants to teach than with the students.

A few schools have delayed innovative programs--like phased electives, for instance--but most that I know of are continuing their present curricula or inaugurating new ones.

As to innovative programs, schools are still jumping on the "elective courses" bandwagon.... School systems are also adding themselves to the number having behavioral objectives written.... Some...systems are especially interested in individualizing instruction (hardly innovative), particularly for use in new school buildings called "open." The openness mainly results from the lack of a fourth wall for a classroom.

A program of electives is being offered as an alternative to the regular programs to provide more choices for students. No other changes in instructional services.

There are several districts beginning elective programs in junior highs this year. [One city] has become brave and has all five secondary schools, grades 8-12, on 60-day elective courses in English.

...additional "English by choice" programs, the addition of a new reading consultant, variable scheduling, change from nine-week electives to semester electives, a recommendation that English be dropped as a graduation requirement after grade 10, and the "Rent-a-Poet" project.

One system reported a transition to a middle-school concept with the result that there was more individual instruction for pupils. A couple of systems are "innovating" by stressing reading (for a change).

[Our] alternative schools continue to flourish and to generate distinctive English programs that enrich the whole district.

In our district we are moving more and more to the open school. We feel that flexibility of building design and curriculum can go hand in hand.

In general, there is a trend toward more student participation in curriculum development, and classrooms are more open (less structured).

We have no mandated textbook lists, curriculum guides, or methods. Our division of the State Department of Education makes itself available to individual districts to aid districts in assessing needs and designing curriculum to meet those needs. I am pleased that the recent experiences I've had in this line have been toward the affective curriculum and away from the cognitive....

A very positive note is the new state textbook adoption which will give language arts teachers, K-8, more options in selecting materials. In spite of budget and computer restrictions, there seems to be a definite trend toward greater flexibility in programs and hopefully, in attitudes.

There is less...daring [innovating] being done because of tighter budgeting; all English departments are holding to units of study proven worthwhile last year with last year's materials. Of course, for our district, this means a good program, for we have been evaluating and re-evaluating English instruction in all schools perennially.... A new course for just under 300 students in one...senior high is a humanities for the masses kind of course we call "Man Creating." Five teachers are teaming to teach it; it's built in cycles concentrating in all areas of the creative arts.

Three courses have been written by a selected group of teachers... "The Black Experience: An Introduction to Black Studies"; "From Africa through the Harlem Renaissance"; and the third, "From the Harlem Renaissance to the Present." It is a humanities oriented series of courses, including history, literature, music, and art.

The pressure is still on for Career Education. I'm trying desperately to bring our own staff--and local administrators--to view the movement in its broadest sense.

...the whole business of career education in our schools is still pretty much in the talking state...I think we are going to get...career education...into our schools, but not to the extent that we had all formerly predicted.

In general, there is a growing trend toward conservatism in education in our state. Perhaps the ominous shadow of state assessment, the legislators' conception of accountability, is responsible.

We're in the middle of a state-wide needs assessment in reading, writing, and literature. Two years ago we gathered together a committee of master teachers from about the state, wrote goals and objectives. Last year we wrote and reviewed criterion referenced test items.... This year we're doing random sample testing to see where the kids are in respect to those goals and objectives. Then we'll fill the gap.

Our new Contemporary Learning Center, a large pilot school for potential dropouts, is developing performance-based modules in English for possible replication within the district. The effect of this fledgling program, the effect of competency-based teacher education as mandated for all teacher-training institutions in the state by 1977, and the effect of a large-scale criterion-referenced testing pilot being conducted...cannot yet be assessed; but the composite impact could be considerable.

The most obvious trends in English classrooms across the district include unprecedented emphasis upon developmental and remedial reading (K-12), an enforced preoccupation with career education, a steadily increasing concern with oral English, and a wide implementation of English as a Second Language programs in schools with a high concentration of Mexican-American students.

A conservative trend is setting in...with increased attention given to language arts fundamentals rather than frills.... Reading courses for teachers, in-service training on college campuses or in schools by college personnel, and continuing attention to teacher accountability in this area--all of these are present. Electives seem no longer to hold center stage unless they are well-conceived, substantive, and helpful--either vocationally or culturally. Ethnic literature, including white ethnic, is gaining ground modestly.

Although the excitement of innovative programs has survived, notes of discouragement are heard as computers reject flexibility in scheduling. Problems have developed specifically in continuing a...mini-elective and skills program.

The...meagerness of instructional materials makes it very difficult...for English teachers...to diversify learning strategies as we are being urged to do and as we want to do. The problem is compounded by the continued enforcement of an archaic state textbook adoption policy: one hard-cover book per subject per student.... Only wide availability of more diversified and flexible teaching materials can allow us to make the admonition INDIVIDUALIZE LEARNING into reality....

Inservice is now so expensive ($6.80 - $7.95 per hour) since teachers refuse to participate unless paid or given released time. Substitute pay ranges from $26.00 to $35.00 per day. A district faced with such

potential costs tends to say no to any in-depth program. Teachers refuse when asked to work eight-hour days, which would include the needed inservice.... Those teachers who want help...are frustrated because neither the school district (contracts) nor the universities will help them.

6. WHAT PROBLEMS, IF ANY, HAVE ARISEN AS A CONSEQUENCE OF ATTEMPTS TO INTEGRATE THE SCHOOLS, AND HOW DO THESE PROBLEMS AFFECT THE PERFORMANCE OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH?

One reading the responses from members of the network cannot help feeling that neither the schools nor, by implication, the society has been effectively integrated. Apparently forgetful that the absence of racial or ethnic minorities may itself both be and reveal a problem, a number of respondents seem to assume that where there are few or no Black, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Asian, or Native American students in the schools, no problem exists. In various parts of the nation, issues appear blurred: to bus or not to bus displaces the key question--to integrate or not to integrate. Where integration has occurred, teachers of English often seem unprepared to cope with the resulting range of cultural dialects, attitudes, and approaches to learning represented in their classrooms.

In short, though most teachers and administrators evidence sympathy toward integrating the schools and much good will toward youngsters of racial minorities, good will cannot substitute for commitment to--and competency in--educating all the children of all the people in ethnically pluralistic and truly democratic classrooms.

> Integration is not a problem except in one or two of the larger cities.... Not much heard about it there.
>
> I cannot say that we have had any problems with integration; for the few minorities we do have, racial and ethnic, we have always made accommodation.
>
> ...the revolution is over in [this] area. There are substantial numbers of blacks and native-born Puerto Ricans in the...public schools, but the...schools are doing a superb job in providing an education for the kids that the communities send them. There are very few blacks in the suburban schools.
>
> The public schools and the private academies seem to be functioning in a rather uneventful co-existence. The academies seem to be full, and there continues to be a general overcrowding in our public schools. Aside from this, there are no apparent problems and certainly no conflicts.
>
> We weathered faculty integration surprisingly well last year--"surprisingly" because the administration gave no priority to teachers in innovative programs. The principals and supervisors had to punt, scramble, and make do in order to save programs where key teachers were transferred.

Integration seems no longer to be discussed very much. Quality of education, long absent (in my opinion) in many quarters of public/private education, seems to be the issue: What kind of education is my child going to receive? This is what parents seem to be asking, at least those who care.

Another factor which has serious consequences...is busing. To date, [the] superintendent...has been able to out-reason and out-quote and out-deny minority claims of segregation and misuse of federal funding.... But yesterday's headlines suggest that he can no longer. The Language Arts supervisor for K-12 is concerned as to what busing will do to individual high school English curriculum.

The integration issue is not getting much public attention. Last year the superintendent of the nearby...system failed to have his contract renewed. He had proposed that 100 black children be bused to his suburb. The issue is still there (of course), but underground.

We are trying to open five new elementary schools this year (with a declining citywide school population); some of these new schools are constructed in already integrated areas where there were no schools before. The parents do not want the students to be bused five miles away to an integrated school when they have an integrated school across the street.

The problems with the blacks are quite different from the problems with the Chicanos and, like many other places in the country, everyone here is against busing. Add to that the problems we've had with bombings, both last spring and this fall; it's a minor miracle that <u>any</u> teacher is getting <u>anything</u> done with <u>any</u> groups of youngsters.... There is no evidence at the moment whether these bombs are inspired by attempts at integration; I would guess they are not. However, the mood at the moment with most teachers I know is that things are going along pretty well, all things considered, and we'll do the best job we can under the circumstances.

Some problems in some schools have occurred when students (from predominantly all black student body) have come to other schools. There has been a momentary anxiety in the receiving schools. Many problems were averted by summer planning and additional funds for staff and material. As a result, the attitude of staff has been more positive, less hostile....

...we have some teachers clamoring to teach Black literature or Chicano literature in separate special classes; many of these have been successful in establishing "a course." On the other hand, we are trying to get many teachers to teach the principles of good literature, incorporating Black, Chicano, and Indian literature in already established courses. So far, I think most teachers are failing, regardless of their purpose. Those who stress minority literature [in] special courses are ignoring a major part of the rest of the English curriculum. Many of the teachers who are trying to incorporate minority literature are failing to get

standards of any kind across--practically all of these teachers are doing a better job with literature than they are with composition, oral activities, mechanics of writing, and the like.

In our metropolitan areas almost every teacher is unable to work with the broad range of abilities, attitudes, dialects, learning styles, and cultural patterns found in integrated classrooms.

The problems associated with integration are mainly two: (a) Although there are many bright children of the black race, there are many in the low I.Q. bracket. Many come, too, from a more limited socio-economic background. (b) There are more behavior problems, some with racial overtones. The first of these becomes a matter of degree, because there are white pupils from limited backgrounds and with low I.Q., too. The effect on English teachers is the same as on teachers of other subjects, but all are affected.

WHAT KIND OF YEAR DO TEACHERS OF ENGLISH ANTICIPATE?

In response to this question, members of the network revealed a number of concerns, some of which have implications for the teaching of English not only for the coming year but for the decade ahead, others of which seemed matters of the moment.

A number of respondents noted what seemed to be, if not growing docility among students, a lesser commitment to national causes than students displayed in the 1960s. Most teachers, though not all, seemed to feel relieved by what they saw as a return to normalcy:

> Lest I seem too "negative," school is much better than it was in the late 60's and in 70-71. There is a slight return of school spirit. Football players are not jocks anymore. More kids "yell" at the games.
>
> Students are much less radicalized on high school and college campuses; the pressure for courses without grades, "doing your own thing"...and escaping from work seems less obvious.... Students are much more interested in what is affecting them and in what <u>will</u> affect them rather than in causes to save the world. Even on urban campuses (high school and college) the causes that are rallying points are fewer, and are supported more sanely and with less fervor.
>
> ...we are giving diplomas to increasing numbers of illiterates every year. Relatively few educators seem terribly concerned about whether kids <u>know</u> anything when they graduate, so long as they've had a happy and quiet school year....
>
> An important change in student attitude that is noticeable is that students do not wish to compete for grades. ...grades have become less important, and the belief that school will help them earn more money is fading.

There was some concern that the scarcity of positions for English teachers was adversely affecting the profession:

> There is--I believe--an undercurrent of fear abroad, specifically as to getting and holding English-teaching jobs. This seems to be true even though USES [the United States Employment Service] and college agencies note that there are still more openings for "good" English teachers than for teachers of other subjects. ...[there] seems to me [to be] an excessive concern not to offend administrators.

> Not a bad year, though for those who are already in the field. ...with budget tightening all over the place, young folks anxious to get into the field had better start learning how to weave baskets if they're planning to eat.

In response to almost every question, members of the network commented on the effects that budgetary restrictions were having on teachers' professional lives. This one proved no exception to the pattern:

> [Our state] ranks high in teacher qualification and preparation, but way low in national average salary. This gets to us sometimes.

> The laymen and State Department of Public Instruction want to make sure that teachers earn their money [as evidenced by] the push for performance based recertification, which is being field tested this year....

> Non-parents especially want lower property taxes which support schools. So do parents, and they don't see that this wish hurts their children's education.

> Money continues to be tight, resulting in increased class loads, restrictions on travel, attempts to undermine tenure (of course in the name of improved education rather than because of less money)....

Censorship appears to be an increasing concern, perhaps a consequence both of recent decisions of the United States Supreme Court permitting local community standards to determine what is obscene or pornographic as well as of a conservative reaction to the so-called moral permissiveness of the 1960s:

> I was asked to testify for a young...English teacher who was fired and who...chose to sue the district. Original charges were centered around a film...which she showed after school to two students who were doing independent research on the Black movement. Vocally the argument was that she might have stirred up an activist movement among the student body, that she was immature in her close relationship with students. Boiled down to a personality conflict with the principal, not on court records. Proves that if a district is of a mind to fire someone, they'll find a way: the five minutes too long helping a student with a special problem, leaving the classroom to find a reference in the library, helping students pursue individual interests, involving students in designing their own curriculum. She lost.

> We are receiving more and more complaints concerning books in the curriculum. Oddly enough, most of the complaints are against the schools that are doing the most innovative kinds of activities.
>
> Censorship is on the rise.

A number of responde[illegible]essed a need for articulation among instructional levels and for sound inservice programs for teachers. Apparently a burgeoning of innovative programs from K through 16--open classrooms, individualized instruction, reductions in requirements, multi-electives, CLEP, external degrees--has left some teachers struggling to find coherence in the curriculum. Too, the growth of year-round schools and of collective-bargaining contracts may be preventing what some regard as badly needed inservice programs for teachers' professional growth:

> The English teachers are requesting more articulation.
>
> We are constantly concerned with K-12 articulation.
>
> What should be the position of English teachers in a local district about to reduce graduation requirements in English? Do NCTE findings show that more students take English if it is not required? If it is required, should all students have certain course content in common, especially at the high school level?
>
> We need help in planning meaningful inservice programs.
>
> ...in general, the plea of these teachers was, "Give us something to do during the pre-school weeks to help us be better teachers." The answer to this plea would involve some planning.
>
> Neither the local bargaining group nor the state associations press for the kinds of inservice programs so desperately needed if schools are going to help that 40 to 50 percent who do not readily learn with conventional materials and methods.

In some responses one could infer the frustration of teachers who have long lived with problems, who are tired of discussion and who now desire ameliorative action:

> I believe that the Council must stop talking about the problems facing the profession and take a stand; spend its limited resources supporting that stand, even if it means losing some members.
>
> I believe that until the teacher associations recognize that they are the ones who must solve--with adequate help--the problems and take the initiative, little effective change will take place.

In summary, the year ahead seems much like the year behind: budgets are tight, class loads grow higher in some districts, multiple-elective programs flourish at the secondary level and open classrooms at the elementary, students seem less willing to become actively engaged in social issues, and racial

tensions persist but seem less volatile. Surprisingly, the role of department chairman grows stronger in some districts as its strength wanes in others. Censorship appears to be more of a problem than it was last year. Too, collective-bargaining agreements seem increasingly to stipulate that teachers are to be paid for attending school or district-sponsored inservice educational programs, with the result that some districts no longer provide inservice education for teachers.

All in all, whether the year ahead will be a good one for students and for teachers looks moot. The general feeling appears to be that the profession is making slow but steady progress in improving the English curriculum, but one is left wondering:

> In sum, I see more hope than I did in the late 1960s, but of course, I reflect a position that may not be consonant with those who want quick change in education and are impatient with the glacial progress that is taking place. I believe that change is taking place, and that the profession must help to do it meaningfully and without being stampeded into it.
>
> ...things look considerably better this year for...English teachers. We...all of us...are getting better at making our case, and it's working. I know of no budget cuts, load increases, or broken legs. Small, easily attainable steps. Inches at a time.
>
> Prognosis: good. Take aspirin and get plenty of rest.
>
> I hope we anticipate a year of accomplishment. From time to time, however, I wonder if we are not really fighting for survival.